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How to get your product on the market, whatever the human or environmental cost, in 4 easy steps

Imagine you want to make money...

Imagine you want to make money. A lot of money. Imagine one way of making a lot of money is to place your industrial product on one of the biggest markets in the world, for as long as possible, and in as many areas of the market as possible. Let's assume this product is potentially unpopular because of its direct or indirect effects on health, on ecosystems and on the living conditions of fellow humans in other parts of the world. How can you make sure you get it on the market anyway?

1. Well, first you have to create a need, by presenting your product as a wonderful and easy solution to fix a terrible and complex problem, like, let's say, hunger.
2. Then, you would have to overcome the unpopularity of your product. You can do that by making sure that people who raise safety, or environmental, or human rights concerns are not heard, or at least not taken seriously.

Of course, you cannot be the only one to say your product is safe, so for example you could pay people labelled as scientists to find the right way to conduct a test so that it will result in the desired conclusion. But that's still not enough.

The next step is to add some institutional credibility to your conclusion. So, you send your studies to a body called an 'agency', preferably a 'safety agency', which sounds more serious. The task of this body should be to issue a very official 'opinion' based on all the available 'information' out there, and not just on the scientific studies that are published in peer-reviewed scientific journals- even your own unpublished, non-peer-reviewed studies should be accepted as science.

Oh, and the human rights concerns (impacts on peasant's or workers' rights for instance)? Easy, just make sure they are not part of the agency's mandate or scope. Bingo!

Now in order to make sure the 'agency' will reach the same conclusion you did (your product is safe, so it should be sold on the market), a very convenient trick is to make sure that your people are labelled as 'experts' and work at the agency in question.

Worried someone might find out about the potential conflict of interest? Don't be, just make sure that in the agency's rules, it is clear that the names of experts cannot be made public. Easy.

Ok, you are almost there....

3. Now you need to make sure that your potentially unpopular product gets the **democratically approved** label. If 'democratically' means approved by the majority, just make sure to convince a majority of elected people to vote in favour of your product. But you need to be ready to spend some money on lobbying here. Because if those people want to be elected again, they can't take unpopular decisions. And you can't always get *your* people elected, of course. So, a good tactic is to make sure that others, who are not directly elected and who are out of the media spotlight, take these decisions instead, , for example, even more experts, but this time in the shape of an 'expert committee'. Of course, these experts must also remain anonymous, like at the agency stage.

Still worried that some nasty public-interest politicians, journalists, activists, or citizens might create some trouble? Just make sure they can never know who voted for what: take all decisions behind closed doors, and make sure that no detailed record is kept. Voilà!

4. If, for some reason, (maybe those pesky citizens campaigned a bit too well), you are still worried that these experts might fail to take the decision you want, there is one last step: in case the committee of anonymous experts (or standing committee) doesn't reach a majority in favour of your product, you can make sure that only one sole body takes the decision, and, to be really thorough, this decision must be based on the 'opinion' of your friendly safety agency!

Congratulations, you can now start feeding ~~the world~~, your shareholders! And you can stop imagining, since this decision process already exists! We call it comitology (another great tactic to avoid public interest is to give things a very boring and technical-sounding name).

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